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*Selections from De Quincey.* Edited, with an Introduction and Notes, by Milton Haight Turk, Ph. D., Professor of English at Hobart College. Boston, U. S. A., and London : Ginn and Company, the Athenaeum Press, 1902. Pp. lxxi, 501.

In this attractive volume, the largest body of selections from De Quincey recently published, there are 67 pages of introduction, some 4 of bibliography, 400 of text proper, and 101 of notes. There is no index.

As an interpretation of De Quincey's individuality, Dr. Turk's introduction is excellent. Sane, well-proportioned, just, sympathetic, it avoids many a pitfall that besets the De Quincey student. The editor is not baffled by the inconsistencies of his subject. He duly minimizes the agency of opium in the development of De Quincey's imagination. He realizes that the Opium-Eater's claim to the rank of philosopher is doubtful. And he scarcely credits even this master of style with the creation of a new literary category, such as De Quincey at times conceived his 'impassioned prose' to be. Upon the man's essentially artistic temperament, however, Dr. Turk lays proper emphasis, rightly discerning his 'most persistent quality' in a certain 'skill in narration'; a skill, not indeed in the formation of plot, but in the poetical elaboration and embellishment of a given autobiographical or semi-historical material.

Perhaps the limits of the edition, perhaps the very intensity and success with which the interpreter has penetrated the spirit of a seemingly isolated literary phenomenon, have denied us here that broader, in a sense external, treatment of De Quincey which we yet desire. Although Dr. Turk has not, it is true, yielded far to the Opium-Eater's wish to be considered a sort of anomaly in literature, yet in a positive way he hardly presents his subject in any broad perspective. We should like to know more than is here told us about the individual's part in the literary movements of his time, more about his intellectual indebtedness to contemporaries and predecessors. The very solitude, and the love of it, which were such potent influences in De Quincey's life and ways of thinking, were they not something for which Wordsworth, Lamb, and Coleridge also had a romantic enthusiasm? Were they not, indirectly perhaps, related to the lonely contemplations of Rousseau? Or if they were, after all, largely native to De Quincey's spirit, did not the poetry of Wordsworth, which so early entranced that spirit, intensify its ideal love of solitude? We should be glad to learn how the poetry of

infancy, in the *Dream Fugue* and *Suspira* and elsewhere, was connected with something very similar in both Coleridge and Wordsworth,<sup>1</sup> indeed with a characteristic strain in the whole romantic school, and, finally, with the New Testament glorification of childhood. There is not an aspect of De Quincey's literary product, one may say deliberately, that is not paralleled in his contemporaries at home or abroad, or does not correspond to some definite vein in his forerunners. Accordingly, I must dissent from Dr. Turk's opinion that De Quincey 'alone—at least among adult Englishmen—was able to preserve in advanced years that glorious faculty of dreaming which is the peculiar privilege of childhood.'<sup>2</sup> Need Addison be instanced to the contrary? De Quincey's famous visions were modeled pretty directly after the prose rhapsodies of Richter, although probably not without reminiscences of Addison's manner; in their own period they may be very rationally classed with the dreams of Coleridge and Landor.<sup>3</sup> Lastly, we wish to be reminded, in estimating De Quincey, that his famous *Confessions* are by no means of a kind by themselves. I pass over instances of the same sort of literature at the time, such as Lamb's short *Confessions of a Drunkard*, and Coleridge's *Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit*, to remark that I have never seen any notice taken of De Quincey's significant citing, in 1853, of Rousseau's and Augustine's *Confessions* as, in a sense, his models.<sup>4</sup> It is evidently from such comparison as the Opium-Eater himself there suggested that the study of his *Confessions* must start out. De Quincey seems to have been acquainted with Rousseau's work as early as 1821;<sup>5</sup> it is possible that he knew Augustine also as early as that.<sup>6</sup>

The failure to judge De Quincey in any large environment distinguishes almost all that has been written about him. To Dr. Turk's fairly inclusive bibliography may be added the following: 1. Dunn, W. A., *Thomas De Quincey's Relation to German Literature and Philosophy*, Strassburg diss. 1900; an attempt to broaden, in one direction at least, the usual narrow treatment; 2. Anton, P., *English Essayists*, etc., Edinburgh, 1882; containing a valuable,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. for example, Coleridge, *Poet. Wks.*, Globe ed., 125, 126, 127, 145, 170, 175, 467, 470.

<sup>2</sup> *Intro.* 63.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Sidney Colvin, *Selections from Landor*, G. T. S. *Intro.* 25, 26.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. De Quincey's *Works*, ed., Masson, 1. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Wks.* 3. 210 (*Selections* 151. 19); *Wks.* 3. 75.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Wks.* 5. 147.

seemingly little known, appreciation. The present writer's dissertation, *The Prose Poetry of Thomas De Quincey*, Leipzig, 1902, offers a more extended bibliography, which would in minor ways supplement Dr. Turk's.

The editor has chosen his selections on the whole judiciously, arranging them, especially the biographical material, in such sequence as to make them throw light on one another. So far as my comparisons enable me to speak, the text is scrupulously well cared for, and the typography unimpeachable. The selections are : *The Affliction of Childhood* ; *Introduction to the World of Strife* ; *A Meeting with Lamb* ; *A Meeting with Coleridge* ; *Recollections of Wordsworth* ; *Confessions* ; a portion of *Suspiria* ; *The English Mail-Coach* ; *Murder as One of the Fine Arts, Second Paper* ; *Joan of Arc* ; and *On the Knocking at the Gate in 'Macbeth'*.

His preference of the earlier version of the *Confessions* Dr. Turk justifies in part by showing De Quincey's uncertainty whether the enlarged edition were really better.<sup>1</sup> The editor's evidence on this point is his most important single contribution to the knowledge of his subject.<sup>2</sup>

In compiling his notes Dr. Turk has exercised no little industry ; although he does not in all cases acknowledge information that is second-hand. He has borrowed from Masson, Garnett, and Hart, adding, however, much valuable material, part of it easy, part of it difficult, of access for the unaided reader. I shall throw into compressed form some comment on the notes and some further information, with queries, about the text, observing page and line in the *Selections* ; references to De Quincey's *Works*, ed. Masson, are indicated by *Wks.* ; those to poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge follow the Globe Edition.

1. 16, 17, 'Two . . . eldest of three' : cf. 468. 30, *Wks.* 3. 232, 'of two evils by very much the least'. 2. 20, 'whisper' : cf. 82. 11 ; 295. 11 ; 323. 11 ; 333. 30 ; etc. Dr. Turk pays too little attention to the details of De Quincey's style. 4. 8 : cf. Exodus 13. 21. 6. foot-note : cf. Coleridge's *Osorio* 4. 3. 75, *Poet. Wks.* 392. 8. 9, 10, 'Bible illustrated' : cf. Lamb, *Elia*, 'Witches', etc. Dr. Turk might add with advantage many Biblical references, in order to show how profoundly De Quincey's style is influenced by the vision-literature, for example, of the Bible ; cf. below, note on 337. 20. 8. 30 : cf. Mark 2. 23. 15. 2 : cf. 7. 30 ; 43. 25 ; 149. 12 ; etc. ; a mannerism. 17.

<sup>1</sup> Cf., however, *Wks.* 3. 220.

<sup>2</sup> *Selections*, Introd. 47, 48.

16, 'purples' etc.: cf. *The Use of Color in the . . . English Romantic Poets*, A. E. Pratt, Chicago diss. 1898. 56. 7: cf. note on 368. 34. 74. 27: A longer note needed? cf. 103. 4; etc. 77. 28. Daniel 5. 25. 119. 21: cf. Dorothy Wordsworth's description, Coleridge, *Poet Wks.*, Introd. 34. 141. 8: De Quincey seems in error. Wordsworth is represented in devout contemplation, not, however, as a disciple; cf. *Wordsworth Soc. Transactions* 3. 59. Haydon's painting is in the Cincinnati Art Museum. 146. 10: This passage, which Dr. Turk does not notice, is from Wordsworth's *Lament of Mary Queen of Scots*, stanza 6, *Poet. Wks.* 568; for De Quincey's 'to' read 'can.' 150. 5: cf. Exodus 7. 12. 150. 9: cf. Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, Bk. 6, *Poet. Wks.* 482. 151. 19: reference to Rousseau's *Confessions*? 151. 20: reference to first 3 parts of *Dichtung u. Wahrheit*? 156. 11: Dr. Turk's far-fetched parallel from Chaucer does not explain De Quincey's direct quotation from some other source;<sup>1</sup> cf. *Wks.* 13. 334. 116. 11: observe use of 'the.' 225. 24, 25: who were these surgeons? 227. 25: cf. 150. 12; 210. 2. 228. 9. Note needed on Jonas Hanway. 236. 11: 'Prolegomena'; cf. Kant's *Prolegomena*, etc., Riga, 1783. 249. 12: cf. 336.3. 251. 5. cf. *Macbeth* 2. 2. 25. 262. foot-note, *reculer*, etc.: from Leibnitz, *Théodicée*? 265. 1, 'Levana': Dr. Turk, like previous annotators, fails to notice Jean Paul's work on education, *Levana*, etc., 1807, the title of which seems to have captivated De Quincey's ear. The notes on the text at this point, as indeed on other portions of the strictly 'impassioned prose' in the *Selections*, are scanty—an occasion of surprise when one considers the prominence usually given to De Quincey's dreams; cf. Introd. 49, 50, and notes to pages 265–276, 329–339. Having in view the future publication of material on the 'prose poetry,' I shall restrict my comment here. 266, foot-note: the reference to Wordsworth's metaphor is unnoticed by Dr. Turk; I have been unable to identify it. 273. 'Savannah-la-Mar': Cannot some Romance scholar point out a source for the first part of this bit of 'impassioned prose?' 290. 20: cf. Luke 24. 32. 291. 1: How can Dr. Turk suppose a reminiscence here from Wordsworth? De Quincey distinctly says (290. 32, 33) that his story is 'from one of our elder dramatists.' The monarch with his omrahs at Agra

<sup>1</sup>The quotation is of course adapted from Eccles. 38. 25 (I quote from the Authorized Version): 'How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plow and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen and is occupied in their labors, and whose talk is of bullocks?—ED.

sounds somewhat like Dryden's *Aurengzebe*, in which, however, there is no such tale of hawk and eagle. I am indebted to Prof. W. Strunk, Jr., of Cornell, for reference to *Of English Dogs*, 1576, Joh. Caius, tr. A. Fleming, in Arber's *English Garner* 3. 253, where the story is told, not of an oriental sultan, but of Henry VII of England; Caius' source is simply said to be 'an history.' 317, footnote: De Quincey, in order to make his diagram clear, should say that his Y is inverted, with the basal arm northward; cf. 363. 19. 319. 2: cf. Dr. Turk's note on 164. 15; observe the influence of alliteration on De Quincey. 328. 19, 'cany': cf. 18. 4, 'lawny'; *Wks.* 5. 141, 'ferny'; note adj. termination common in the English romantic school.<sup>1</sup> 333. 28: cf. Wordsworth's 'she shall lean her ear,' etc., *Poet. Wks.* 115.<sup>2</sup> 334. 25: cf. Crashaw's 'conscious water.'<sup>3</sup> 334. 27: cf. 334. 21; John 1. 5. 335. 15, 'were': note De Quincey's faulty syntax. Is he quoting? 336. 3: cf. 249. 11; cross-references throw much light on De Quincey's style. 337. 20; 337. 28; 338. 5: cf. Revelation 8. 10; 12. 5; 9. 13. In this *Dream Fugue* there are many reminiscences of Biblical vision-literature. 368. 34, 'stag': to Prof. J. M. Manly, through Prof. J. M. Hart, I am indebted for reference to *Englische Studien* 5. 160, where this elusive creature has been run down. Dr. Turk avoids the difficulty by silence. 371. 28: cf. *Johnsoniana*, Piozzi 30 (*Bartlett's Quotations* 375).

Several of these references, for example the last, should not have escaped the editor. His notes, however, are full enough, and, above all, the introduction is of a quality high enough, entirely to warrant the existence of this book. Let us not quarrel with the demand of the day for short cuts, through annotated selections, to an acquaintance with standard authors.

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<sup>1</sup> The allusion in 'cany' is probably to *Par. Lost* 3. 439; 'lawny' is as old as Bishop Hall (1598); and 'ferny' is found in the eighteenth century, and earlier; cf. *NED.* under these words.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> De Quincey's phrase is rather a Hebraism: cf. Ps. 17. 6; 31. 2, etc., and, in Milton's version of Ps. 88: 'Thine ear with favour bend.' By De Quincey the verb is of course used more literally.—ED.

<sup>3</sup> But Crashaw, like De Quincey, was employing a Latinism; thus, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, night is conscious (6. 588; 13. 15), the fields (7. 385), the forest (2. 438), and the rocks (6. 547).—ED.